appeared in Deccan Chronicle of the 10th April, 1988 wherein the Minister of Planning and Programme Implementation has stressed the need for a change in reservation policy so that benefit percolates down to the really needy in the society;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) On the occasion of the valedictory function of the Post-Graduate Students' Union of Law of the Osmania University, in answer to a question, while developing the theme of social justice, Minister of Planning and Programme Implementation had said that within the classes which are enjoying reservation, the benefits must percolate down to the poorer segments and for this purpose, he, advocated reservational preferences based on the economic criteria within these classes. The Minister had observed that the only way to resolve, was to provide preferences to the people at the lower levels within these classes based on their economic status i.e. people with the lowest strata of income to be given the highest preference and gradationally, it could move upward so that the benefits are enjoyed and confined within the class paving way to social justice. The news item mentioned at (a) above does not appear to have paraphrased the above views comprehensively. These were the personal views of the Minister of Planning.

Fire at Jabalpur ordnance depot

1070. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the 'Indian Express' dated the 26th March, 1988 to the effect that Khalistan Commando Force has owned responsibility for the fire that broke out in the C.O.D. at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard; and

(c) whether any steps have been taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In the afternoon of 23rd March, 1988 a fire broke out at the Ammunition Sub Depot of Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur, causing explosions in two magazines. A Staff Court of Inquiry has been set up by the Army to go into the causes of the incident, the extent and value of loss etc. In addition to the Court of Inquiry another investigating agency has also gone into the matter. There is presently no reason to believe that the Khalistan Commando Force had a hand in the incident, although they have claimed the responsibility. Instructions have been issued to intensify vigilance, and for improving fire fighting capabilities.